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# Introduction

**I**s there anything more valuable in preschool ministry than a great idea? You might have the perfect facility, the most up-to-date check-in system, and an army of volunteers. (Okay, maybe that's a dream.) But what you really need are ideas that appeal to the heart of a preschooler.

Whether you're a preschool ministry veteran or just starting the adventure, this book is packed with all the ideas you need, when you need them: now! Each of the more than 175 ideas in this book is designed to help you introduce preschoolers to Jesus and the Bible—in relational, experiential, and fun ways.

## Get Set, Go!

Here's a snapshot of the different ways you can use this book to find the idea you need. **And be aware that bold text within each chapter is spoken text.**

### TOPIC

Each idea is categorized by topic. If you're looking for a specific lesson or theme topic, simply scan the topics in the Table of Contents on page 3, or see the Topic Index on page 179.

### CATEGORY

*The Giant Book of Preschool Ideas for Children's Ministry* provides numerous ways to quickly find the idea you need. You'll find comprehensive indexes beginning on page 175 arranged in categories including Action Plays, Bible Experiences, Crafts, Games, Prayers, Songs, and Snacks.

### SCRIPTURE

Many ideas have a direct Scripture link. To find an idea based on a Scripture, just go the Scripture Index on page 178.

## Safety First!

### ALLERGY ALERT!

#### Allergy Alerts

Be aware that some kids have allergies to certain foods and other materials. The ideas in this book that include these items have an Allergy Alert symbol. Always check with parents beforehand to see whether children have allergies or dietary concerns.

### BALLOON WARNING!

#### Balloon Warning

Children under 8 years of age can choke or suffocate on uninflated or broken balloons. Adult supervision required. Keep uninflated balloons away from children. Discard broken balloons at once. Balloons may contain latex.



# The Miraculous Catch of Fish

John 21:1-13

## So Many Fish!

### Bible Experience



#### SUPPLIES

Bible, masking tape

**B**efore kids arrive, use masking tape to create a boat shape on the floor that's large enough for everyone to sit inside later on.

Have children sit in a circle on the floor with you. Open your Bible to John 21, and show kids the words. Tell them the Bible is God's special book.

Say: **The Bible tells about a time Jesus came to his disciples after he died and rose from the grave. The disciples were Jesus' friends. Some of the disciples had decided to go fishing.** Have kids sit in the boat shape and pretend to hold fishing poles. Have them all pretend to cast their fishing lines off the left side of the boat.

**The disciples weren't able to catch anything all night. In the morning while they were still on the boat, Jesus appeared on the beach and told them to try fishing from the right-hand side of the boat.** Have kids raise their right hands. **The disciples didn't recognize Jesus, but they went ahead and did what he told them to do.** Have all the kids pretend to cast their lines off the right-hand side of the boat. **When they did, they caught so many fish they couldn't pull the fish into the boat!** Pretend you caught a fish on your line

that's too heavy for you. Have the children come around you to help try pulling the fish into the boat. Pretend that, even with all their help, you just can't get the fish in the boat.

**That's when John—one of the disciples—realized the man on the beach was Jesus. John told Peter the man was Jesus. Peter was so excited Jesus was there that he jumped into the water and swam to shore.** Have three children step out of the boat shape and pretend to swim. **The other disciples came to shore in the boat, pulling all the fish with them.** Have the kids who are still in the boat pretend to row with a heavy net full of fish.

**When the disciples got to the beach, Jesus had already made a fire. He cooked fish for them and had bread as well. So the disciples got to have a special breakfast with Jesus.** Have all the kids step out of the boat shape and sit in a circle with you on the floor. Lead them in pretending there's a fire in the center of your circle and you're all eating breakfast.

Ask:

- *When is a time you got to have a special breakfast with someone?*
- *What do you think about Jesus giving his friends all those fish?*
- *What do you think about Jesus cooking breakfast for his special friends?*

Say: **The disciples recognized Jesus after he helped them catch all those fish.**



#### SUPPLIES

1 hairnet per child, 1-foot lengths of yarn, small fish shapes cut out of poster board, crayons

## Net Full of Fish

### Craft

**S**ay: **When the disciples went fishing, they used nets to catch their fish. Let's make a net full of fish to remind us of the miracle Jesus performed.**

Give each child several poster-board fish. Set out crayons, and have kids color their fish in any way they choose. When they're done, have children place all their fish to their right. Then place a hairnet to each child's left.

**After the disciples told Jesus they hadn't caught any fish, he told them to cast their net on the right-hand side of the boat and they *would* catch fish.** Have kids raise their right hands, and then have them move their nets from their left sides to their right sides next to their fish. Have kids place their fish inside their hairnets. Help them each close up the opening in their hairnet and tie it with yarn.



**Jesus helped his friends do something that they were having a hard time doing. They couldn't catch fish, so Jesus helped them catch a lot of fish in their nets.**

Ask:

- *When have you had a hard time doing something?*
- *When has someone helped you do something you couldn't do on your own?*
- *What is a way you could help someone who is having a hard time?*

Say: **Jesus always has the right answer and knows just what to do!**

## Fish Bounce Game

**S**ay: **When the disciples caught all the fish in their net, they had to work together to get the fish into the boat. Let's play a game to see what it's like working together to get something done.**

Spread a bedsheet on the floor. Have kids gather around the sheet and each hold an edge, lifting the sheet off the floor. Tell them the sheet is their net. Toss one balloon onto the sheet. The balloon is the fish. Have kids move the sheet up and down like waves in the water. Tell them to try keeping the fish on the net. As kids bounce the balloon on the sheet, occasionally add a balloon. The more balloons you add, the harder it'll get.

Keep going until you've tossed all the balloons onto the sheet. It's okay if some bounce off—just pick them up and toss them back on. After all the fish have gone into the net, have kids set the sheet down and sit down around it.

Ask:

- *What was it like trying to keep the balloons on the sheet?*
- *Why was it important to have everyone work together to keep the balloons on the sheet?*
- *What are some ways you can work together with someone in your family to help get something done?*

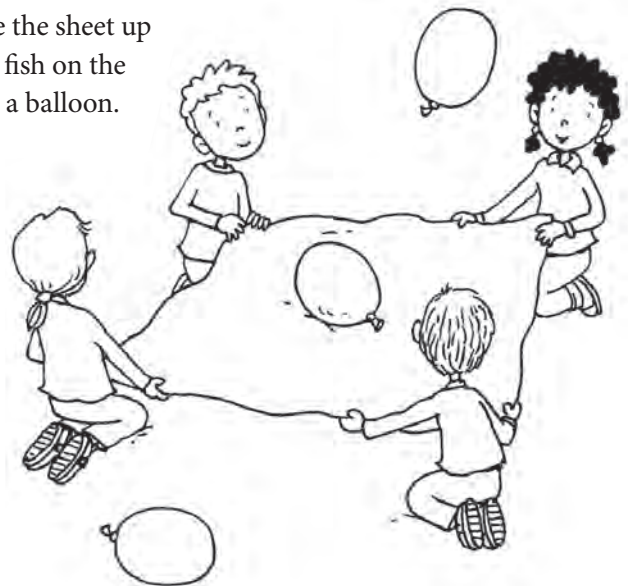
Say: **Jesus loves it when we work together for him.**



### SUPPLIES

large bedsheet, 10 inflated balloons with a fish drawn on each one

**BALLOON WARNING!**  
See page 5





#### SUPPLIES

fish crackers, small disposable cups, 2 large opaque bowls or plastic tubs, antibacterial gel (optional)

**ALLERGY ALERT!**  
See page 5

## Snack Catch

### Snack

**S**et two bowls up high enough that kids can reach in but can't see what's in them. Fill the bowl on the right full of fish crackers. Leave the bowl on the left empty. Have kids clean their hands, and then have kids stand in a line in front of the empty bowl on the left. Give each child a cup.

Say: **Let's have a snack that helps us see how the disciples may've felt when they caught all those fish. The disciples fished all night and weren't able to catch anything.** Give each child a turn at trying to scoop a snack out of the empty bowl on the left. **When the disciples followed Jesus' instructions to throw their net on the right-hand side of the boat, they caught a lot of fish.** Help kids scoop a snack out of the full bowl on the right. Let kids sit down, pray, and eat.

Ask:

- *What was it like when you didn't get a snack the first time?*
- *What was it like when you were able to scoop up fish from the other bowl?*

Say: **When the disciples first saw Jesus on the beach, they didn't know who he was. But they still listened to him and did what he told them to do. They were glad they listened and obeyed. We can obey Jesus, too.**



#### SUPPLIES

none

## Obey

### Song

**S**ay: **Let's sing a song about obeying Jesus.** Teach preschoolers the following words and motions to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

Sing:

**I will, I will, I'll obey.** (*nod head up and down*)

**Jesus help me; this I pray.** (*fold hands in prayer*)

**Help me see you do great things.** (*point to eyes*)

**That is what obeying brings.** (*spread arms out wide*)

**I will, I will, I'll obey.** (*nod head up and down*)

**Jesus help me, this I pray.** (*fold hands in prayer*)



# So Many Fish!

## Action Play



SUPPLIES

none

**R**ead your preschoolers the following rhyme about the miraculous catch of fish, having them follow along as you do the actions in parentheses while you read each line.

Rhyme:

**Simon Peter and a few good friends** (*hold hands with someone*)

**Swam out one day to a boat to spend** (*make swimming motions with arms*)

**Some time there fishing with a net,** (*throw hands out in front*)

**But by morning, they hadn't caught one yet.** (*shake head no*)

**Jesus called out from the beach.** (*cup hands around mouth*)

**His voice was loud enough to reach.** (*cup hand behind ears*)

**Jesus asked, "Did you catch any fish?"** (*hold hands out to sides, palms up*)

**Simon Peter just said, "No, but I wish!"** (*shake head no*)

**"Switch your nets to the right-hand side,"** (*raise right hand above head*)

**Jesus told them. So they tried,** (*cup hands around mouth*)

**And caught so many fish in their net** (*make a circle with arms in front*)

**Simon Peter decided to get wet!** (*jump forward and hold nose as if jumping in water*)



SUPPLIES

none

# Encouraging Prayer

## Prayer

**H**ave kids stand in a circle with you and hold hands.

Say: **Jesus encouraged the disciples when he appeared to them. He encouraged them by helping them find fish to catch. He encouraged them by spending time with them.**

Ask:

- *When have you been encouraged by someone?*
- *What are some ways you can encourage others?*

Say: **Let's pray together that Jesus will help us be encouraging to others.** Go around the circle and have kids name someone they can encourage. After everyone has shared, pray the following prayer.

Pray:

**Dear Jesus, thank you for the ways you encourage us. Thank you that we can encourage others. Help us be encouraging to the people we meet. In your name we pray, amen.**







**THIS IS A SAMPLE**  
**The number of pages is limited.**

Purchase the item for the complete version.

